Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM)

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History of Mitigation

- Mitigation is required when a permit applicant proposes to fill wetlands as part of a development project
- Prior to UMAM:

  Mitigation Ratios

  - 1 acre of impact = 2 to 5 acres of creation of wetlands as mitigation
  - Separate ratios for melaleuca wetlands
- Previous rule did not include a functional assessment of wetlands and mitigation

History of UMAM

- January 2000 – Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability (OPPAGA) found that mitigation ratios do not adequately address gains and losses of wetland functions
- In 2000 Legislature directed FDEP and WMD's to develop a functional assessment method
- Extensive public input over a 4 year rulemaking process to develop UMAM rule.
- DEP Rule 62-345 F.A.C. became effective in February 2004

Chapter 373.414 (18), F.S.

The department shall adopt UMAM by rule and thereafter "the rule shall provide an exclusive and consistent process for determining the amount of mitigation required to offset impacts to wetlands and other surface waters, and once effective, shall supersede all rules…that determine the amount of mitigation needed to offset such impacts."

Chapter 373.414 (18), F.S.

Once the department adopts the uniform mitigation assessment method by rule, the uniform mitigation assessment method shall be binding on the department, the water management districts, … and shall be the sole means to determine the amount of mitigation needed to offset adverse impacts to wetlands and other surface waters and to award and deduct mitigation bank credits.

Uses of UMAM

- Evaluates functions of all types of wetlands, surface waters, and benthic communities in all parts of the state of Florida

- Includes assessment of both direct and secondary impacts

Freshwater Communities

Mangrove/Salt Water Communities

Seagrasses/Benthic Communities

Uses of UMAM

UMAM Does Address:

- Amount of mitigation needed to offset a wetland impact
- Professional collaboration and documentation of wetland functions and mitigation evaluations

UMAM Does Not Address:

- Reduction and elimination
- Appropriateness of mitigation
- Out-of-kind mitigation
- Cumulative impacts
- Mitigation for certain types of secondary impacts (manatee speed zones, wildlife crossings)
- Whether all conditions for issuance have been met

UMAM Assessment and Scoring

Staff Process for UMAM Scoring

- Applicant submits site plans, wetland lines, and preliminary UMAM information
- District staff reviews hydrologic, land use, wildlife, soils and other technical information
- Most staff has extensive field experience in their geographic areas and in conducting UMAM assessments
- Staff conducts site visit and makes the final determination on UMAM scores

UMAM Scoring Categories

- Location & Landscape Support
- Water Environment
- Community Structure

Location and Landscape Support

- Position /Relationship with Offsite Habitats
- Adjacent Land Uses
- Wildlife access to other habitats
- Life history support for wetland species

Water Environment

- Hydrology - timing, frequency, depth and duration of inundation or saturation
- Flow patterns & water level indicators
- Water Quality effects on fish and wildlife habitat
- Soil moisture
- Hydrologic stress

Community Structure

- Plant Species and distribution
- Appropriate vegetation
- Vertical structure
- Vegetation Health
- Regeneration/ recruitment
- Microtopography

Benthic/Seagrass Communities

- Review associated with dock & marina projects
- Benthics include marine communities with no plant coverage. Evaluate type & number of benthic organisms
- Seagrasses located along shoreline in shallow waters
- Condition, regeneration & recruitment
- Structural features and spawning and nesting habitats

Ongoing/Recent Efforts

- Field testing with Audubon staff
- Ongoing UMAM training workshops for regulated public/agencies as well as staff training
- Interagency meetings with other WMDs and DEP to ensure consistency and consider possible rule updates
- Review of Audubon proposal for training module and data tracking

Elements of Proposed Audubon Training Module – Already in use or to be incorporated

- Additional tracking of impacts using hydrologic functional group (short/long hydroperiod)
- Incorporate melaleuca research literature into training materials
- Ensure use of land use codes (FLUCCS) only for native wetland community types

Elements of Proposed Audubon Training Module – Requires Rule Change

- Minimize use of preservation or enhancement for direct wetland impacts
- Tracking of wetland acreage loss/gain in addition to functions
- Natural water storage – track storage volume changes (depth) due to wetland loss
- Require pre/post linear measurement & preservation of of wetland/upland interface
- Melaleuca dominated wetlands - Score Water Environment and Location/Landscape factors as if melaleuca is not present
- Scarcity adjustment factor

UMAM Interagency Coordination

- Part I Form Update/Clarification
- Preservation/Enhancement calculations
- Improve Field Data documentation
- Issues unique to Mitigation Banks
  - Time Lag
  - Location/Landscape

Moving Forward

- Incorporate tracking of long/short term hydroperiod wetlands and mitigation into existing database and training materials
- Incorporate melaleuca research information into training materials
- Continue external/internal UMAM training and workshops
- Continue interagency coordination for consistency